

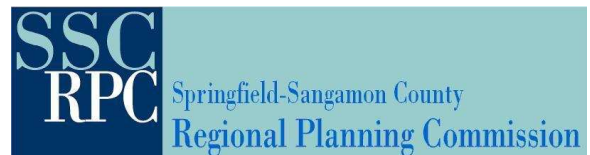
# THE CITIZENS' EFFICIENCY COMMISSION FOR SANGAMON COUNTY

## FIRST YEAR PROGRESS REPORT: PUTTING EFFICIENCY ON THE MAP JANUARY 2013



**The Citizens' Efficiency Commission for Sangamon County was established by referendum in the general election of November 2010.**

**The CEC's purpose is to improve the economy, efficiency, and effectiveness of local government in the area by assessing and proposing opportunities for improved cooperation, coordination, and sharing of services between and among local governments in the County, as well as the reduction or elimination of duplication of effort.**



***This report prepared for the Citizens' Efficiency Commission with the assistance of the Springfield- Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission***

**The SSCRPC: Advising + Planning + Evaluating + Leading**

# FIRST YEAR PROGRESS REPORT

## Citizens' Efficiency Commission for Sangamon County

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## A Message from the CEC Chair

Dear citizens and community leaders:

*Since its inception just over a year ago, it has become evident that the Citizens' Efficiency Commission has been granted a very unique opportunity. This opportunity—to initiate and facilitate a comprehensive dialogue on how to make our local governments better—is one that I believe will have lasting impact on our community.*

*For those invested in the CEC's work, it is already evident that having the Commission in place has helped bring to the forefront the good ideas of some of Sangamon County's best and brightest. I have been pleased to encounter committed public employees at all levels of government. I have been impressed by the volunteerism with which members of the community have responded to the CEC. I have been fortunate to work with twenty-three Commissioners to harness these resources in creatively developing high-quality solutions for some of Sangamon County's difficulties.*

*Even in light of the efforts already underway, the work and mission of the CEC extend beyond any single group's capacity. Getting 118 taxing bodies to think outside the box, work together, and generate savings or improved services for taxpayers simply cannot happen overnight. The CEC will continue to rely on your input and support as it moves forward with another series of recommendations, as well as its final report, in the coming year.*

*We have prepared this progress report in hopes that it will help you understand and engage the CEC's work from the past year. Although tackling our unique opportunity to impact the community has taken considerable time and effort, the CEC has pledged to continue producing quality research and, with your help, results. It is with great pride that I therefore submit the CEC's 2012 progress report to the citizens and leaders of our region.*

Sincerely,

Karen Hasara, Chair  
Citizens' Efficiency Commission  
for Sangamon County



CEC Vice Chair Mike Murphy  
and Chair Karen Hasara

### CEC Commissioners: 2011-2012 (current as of January 2013)

| Appointing Jurisdiction:    | Appointee               | Appointing Jurisdiction:  | Appointee            |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|
| Library Districts           | Hon. Jeff Adkisson      | School Districts          | Hon. Frank McNeil    |
| City of Springfield         | Hon. Dan Cadigan        | Village Governments       | Hon. Mike Murphy     |
| City of Springfield         | Hon. Josh Collins       | SMTD                      | Hon. Drinda O'Connor |
| Township Governments        | Hon. Jerry Crabtree     | Village Government        | Hon. Robert Plunk    |
| Fire Protection Districts   | Hon. Gary Crompton      | Airport Authority         | Hon. Kent Redfield   |
| Township Governments        | Hon. Jim Donelan        | Sangamon County           | Hon. J.D. Sudeth     |
| Sangamon County             | Hon. Kevin Dorsey       | City of Springfield       | Hon. Kenley Wade     |
| Water Districts             | Hon. Cliff Erwin        | City of Springfield       | Hon. Joan Walters    |
| Sangamon County             | Hon. Lee E. Fields, Jr. | Springfield Park District | Hon. Robert Wesley   |
| Community College Districts | Hon. Bob Gray           | School Districts          | Vacant               |
| SMSD                        | Hon. Karen Hasara       | SMEAA                     | Vacant               |
| Sangamon County             | Hon. Marilyn Kushak     |                           |                      |

## Introduction: Putting Efficiency on the Map

In the sport of orienteering, participants attempt to reach a destination by using their navigational skills to move through unfamiliar terrain toward a sometimes unknown end point. In order to reach the orienteer's goal—the destination—he or she must take three critical steps that are equally important to success.

First is an exercise called *self-location*. Self location is important to the task because it creates a *control point*, or understood current location, from which the orienteer will begin. If this starting point is unknown, successfully reaching the end point is unlikely.

Once the starting point is known, the orienteer needs some *navigational tools*, such as maps and a compass. These allow the terrain to be known and help the orienteer consistently establish his or her direction.

Finally, the orienteer needs a *destination*, or desired location that he or she is going to reach. The orienteer is only successful in completing the task if he or she ends up in the correct place.

The citizens of Sangamon County have a relatively clear idea of their desired destination. With a vote of almost 63% in favor, they asked local governments to create a Citizens' Efficiency Commission (CEC) to independently and objectively explore ways in which the County, its municipalities, and its special districts can provide residents with the services they need more efficiently and effectively. From its inception, the CEC's understood goals have been to assess where the community is now and identify the routes local governments can take to improve their efficiency and effectiveness, or, as the CEC has defined it, provide better service at lower cost.



As in other areas of our state and nation, Sangamon County residents want governments at all levels that continually improve. They desire better government programs and structures to prevent the burden of unnecessary costs. Like the orienteer, the CEC's mission is to help navigate the many local governments in the area to this location. Since over 118 Sangamon County taxing bodies were responsible for choosing appointees to the commission, this is no easy task.

As they review their first year of work, the citizen appointees to the CEC would agree that the research and study required to understand what local governments do, how they do it, and how they marshal their resources to address their responsibilities, is more complex and labor intensive than they had imagined. Often groups like the CEC can review what similar bodies in other locations have done to accomplish their tasks. However, the CEC found that while there have been efforts in Illinois and around the nation to look at the efficiency and effectiveness of individual programs or jurisdictions, there have not been any that have taken on a multi-jurisdictional challenge like that given to the CEC. The terrain of local government is understudied and unfamiliar, and there is no other body in the nation attempting to review the efforts of as many governmental bodies as is the CEC.

Looking back on its first year, the CEC discovered that its most difficult orienteering challenge has been to figure out exactly where local governments in Sangamon County currently are situated programmatically, organizationally, and fiscally. Although the time involved in setting up and getting started may seem considerable, the value of solidly identifying Sangamon County's control point cannot be understated. In its first year of work, the CEC made major strides toward defining a starting point, creating navigational tools, and pursuing its goals of improved local efficiency and effectiveness.

This report reviews the past year, the approach that the CEC has taken in doing its work, and the results of its initial efforts.

## Setting the Course: The Establishment of the Commission

Appointment of the 23 members of the CEC is made by the following jurisdictions:

- City of Springfield: 4 members
- Sangamon County: 4 members
- Village Boards: 2 members
- Townships: 2 members
- School districts: 2 members
- Community College districts: 1 member
- Fire Protection Districts: 1 member
- Library Districts: 1 member
- Water districts: 1 member
- Springfield Park District: 1 member
- Springfield Metro Sanitary District: 1 member
- Springfield Mass Transit District: 1 member
- Airport Authority: 1 member
- Metro Exposition and Auditorium Authority: 1 member

As previously noted, the CEC was created by virtue of a resolution of the Sangamon County Board calling for a county-wide referendum asking voters if they supported the establishment of an independent body whose purpose would be to improve the economy, efficiency, and effectiveness of local governments. This resolution came about because County Board members were receiving comments from many of their constituents that indicated that the public believed improvements in governance were needed.

Residents of the County saw this mission as important for a number of reasons. First, the state of the economy was placing unprecedented fiscal pressures on local governments, as well as individuals, families, and businesses. This pressure continues a year after the CEC's inception, which means local governments must find improved ways of doing business if they are to continue to provide basic services while not increasing the burden of taxpayers.

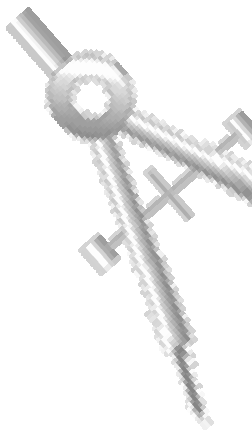
Second, state and federal mandates increased this pressure by placing additional demands on local governments without the funding necessary to support them. Financial difficulties at the state and national level that resulted in reduced financial support for local governments exacerbated this pressure. Not only were the state and federal levels no longer potential sources of new revenue that could be used to address local needs, local governments in the county were actually experiencing roll-backs in funding they had received from these sources in the past.

Finally, state and federal programs often prioritize intergovernmental and regional initiatives as a critical component in their selection of funding recipients, which made finding opportunities for governments and special districts in the region to work together increasingly important. Local leaders believed that local governments would continue to struggle to meet their financial commitments if they did not become more efficient, find ways to work together, and reduce costs and unnecessary duplication of effort.

The referendum passed overwhelmingly, establishing an unpaid 23 member commission (see list of appointing jurisdictions, left). Assisted by the staff of the Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission (SSCRPC), the CEC was charged with making recommendations to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of local government in Sangamon County.

After passage of the referendum in November of 2010, local jurisdictions would have been asked under normal circumstances to make their appointments immediately, as the CEC's establishing ordinance called for the Commission to complete its work by November of 2013. However, appointments were delayed until after the April 2012 municipal elections because the establishing resolution called for members of the CEC to represent 'citizen' interests. According to its establishing resolution, no member of the CEC could hold elective office or be employed by an appointing entity. The appointments were therefore delayed to prevent significant member turnover early in the CEC's work. Local jurisdictions therefore began the appointment process after the April election. Although this process was difficult due to lack of pre-existing networks of communication among jurisdictions, most appointments were made by the middle of May 2011.

During this past year the CEC has found that while many Sangamon County governments work hard to provide quality service to residents at low costs, few of these governments can pinpoint their exact location on the map of service efficiency and effectiveness. The CEC has attempted to help local governments begin to identify where they are now and how they are performing. In order to help others understand governmental performance, it first had to gain a footing for itself.



## Finding a Starting Point: The CEC's Structure and Philosophy

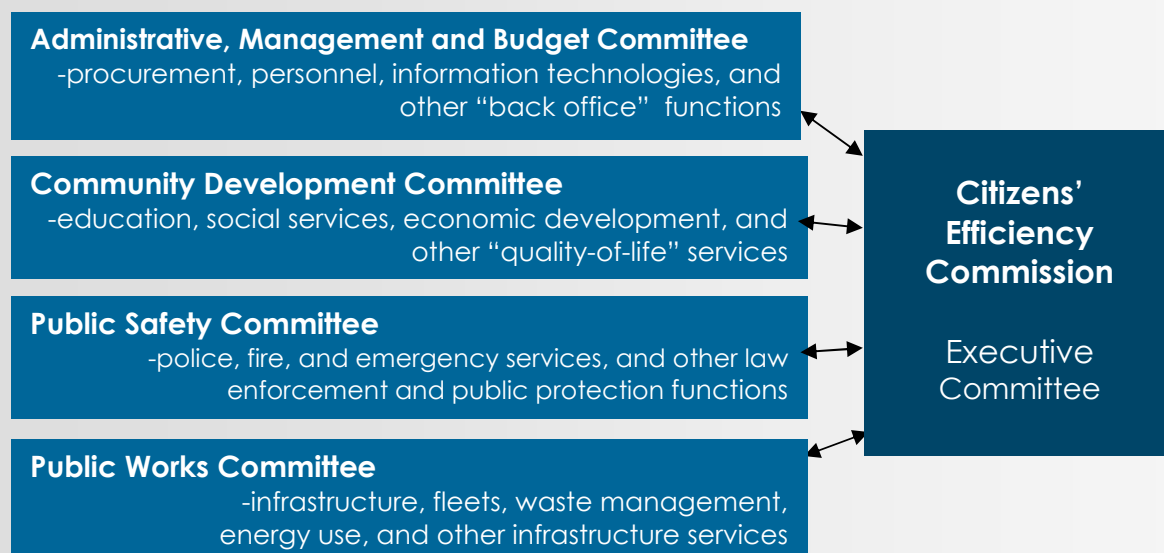
Critical to the CEC's ability to help others understand government performance was the CEC's ability to understand itself. After securing appointments of 23 members from 14 types of jurisdictions, the SSCRPC staff assisted in pulling together the CEC for its first meeting. Its work began with the election of a Commission Chair (Karen Hasara) and later a Vice Chair (Mike Murphy) under bylaws approved by the CEC, which describe how the Commission conducts its business and manages its research.

From the outset, the CEC agreed that it should establish a structure and philosophy for research. In a *Philosophy on Recommendations* document adopted in early 2012, the CEC expressed the desire that all recommendations be thoroughly researched and well-validated. As part of this structure, the Commission established a process whereby committees identify "findings," or areas that they believe merit further research. Upon identifying a finding, an individual committee brings the issue to the full commission for review and support, and then develops a formal recommendation on that issue. The committee undergoes an extensive research process to fully validate the CEC's recommendation.

As suggested by this process, much of the CEC's research is done at the committee level. The CEC chose to structure its committees based on clustered functional areas of service provided by local governments. They developed this structure based on a review of basic local governmental functions written for the CEC by SSCRPC staff.

The committees in this structure report to the full CEC and are coordinated by an Executive Committee made up of the CEC Chair, Vice Chair, and four committee chairs. They deal primarily with the areas of focus listed in the diagram below. As new topics of interest arise, they are assigned to one of the four committees or can be addressed by the Executive Committee.

### CEC Committee Structure



## The Search for Control Points: Background Research

### The Six C's of Citizens' Efficiency:

**Conservation-** reducing costs or inputs within a single entity or among individual members of the public

**Communication-** sharing knowledge or information among multiple entities

**Cooperation-** multiple entities working together by interacting through similar processes or means, though pursuing different ends

**Coordination-** multiple entities working together to pursue the same mission or ends, though working through distinct means or processes

**Collaboration-** multiple entities working toward the same ends and through the same means, by way of formal agreement

**Consolidation-** formal institutional combining or merging of two departments or governmental entities resulting from similarity in means and ends

In the absence of performance data across jurisdictional bounds, during the first several months of the CEC's work, Commissioners reached out to their appointing jurisdictions for presentations on their functions and perceptions of opportunities for efficiency. By integrating these ideas with general information about local governments, the CEC and SSRPC staff produced a series of initial reports to help guide the Commissioners' work.

The first two of these reports detailed functions of local government and practices of other, similar efficiency commissions and panels. The *Functions of Government* document, mentioned previously, assisted the CEC in understanding its scope and capacity. The *Committee on Taskforce Structure* brief situated the CEC with proposed plans for its research process. The next two CEC general reports compared Sangamon County with peer counties in the region. The *Special Districts: A Comparison* inventory helped Commissioners gain a better grasp on unique units of local government and their purposes, as well as how Sangamon County's units of government compare to those in other counties. The *Local Government Expenditures and Efficiency* brief compares Sangamon County to its peers in terms of expenditures and services provided.

While undertaking this research, SSRPC staff has continuously identified a number of studies, reports, and articles relevant to the CEC's research. SSRPC indexed these documents and made them available for the CEC's use early in its work.

The CEC also identified opportunities for cooperation through a series of interviews with local mayors and village presidents. Through these interviews, it identified trends in terms of positive actions being taken, opportunities for improvement, and shared concerns among these local officials. The CEC summarized its observations from these conversations in its report entitled *Preliminary Report: Sangamon County Municipal Leader Interviews*.

The CEC also sought to understand previous efforts in Sangamon County to consolidate and share services. In early 2012, the CEC finalized a *History of Joint Service Efforts in Sangamon County*. This document linked historical consolidation efforts to the literature on intergovernmental collaboration. The report finds that six types of efficiency opportunities exist for the CEC and local governments to consider.

The CEC explored these types of efficiency in this document and others, and found that they provided a framework for thinking about different ways that local governments can address improved performance. When approaching perceived inefficiency, the CEC conducts multi-faceted reviews and examines research questions from the standpoint of any number of potential solutions.

What came to be known as the "Six C's" represent a continuum of options that local governments interested in improving their efficiency and effectiveness can consider. The six C's also provide a framework for CEC proposals as implementation options are considered. The Six C's are: *Conservation, Communication, Cooperation, Coordination, Collaboration, and Consolidation*.



These approaches can involve any number of individual citizens and governing bodies, and any level of formality. They range in difficulty and complexity, from the least complex and difficult, Conservation—which can be done by individual municipalities—to the most difficult, Consolidation—which can involve multiple programs and jurisdictions undertaking formal activity. The CEC utilizes this continuum as a frame of reference and encourages local governments to consider the Six C's as part of its navigational tool kit.

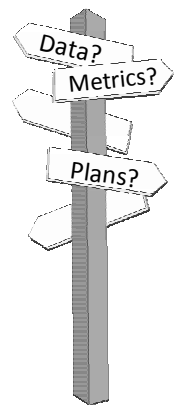
## The Importance of Control Points: Measuring Current Local Efficiency

Considerable time and effort have gone into acclimating the CEC to the present performance of jurisdictions in Sangamon County. Throughout this process, the importance of local governments' and special districts' ability to measure results in service provision became increasingly evident to the CEC.

The CEC found that one major obstacle to review and assessment is the lack of data related to service efficiency collected by the jurisdictions. Without some effective measurement of what is occurring, little understanding of local governments' current performance can exist, as the control points necessary for effective and efficient navigation have not been established. Without knowing the control points of local governments in the area, navigating toward service improvements is nearly impossible.

The CEC found measuring and evaluating what exists to be a substantial and important part of its work. A primary barrier it faced is the time and effort this takes, given that local governments often do not already maintain the data that would allow them to track results. Moreover, local governments and districts seldom have systems in place so that they might manage against metrics distilled from this performance data, and are often working without established plans that identify their goals and objectives over time.

Aside from the difficulties this caused the CEC, staff, and volunteers in assessing local efficiency and effectiveness, this presents a problem for the future. While the CEC is making and will continue to make recommendations intended to improve local government efficiency and effectiveness, **absent a change in the way business is being done—commitments and structures at the regional level that allow and encourage local governments to manage toward results—the CEC fears that additional gains in efficiency and effectiveness that could be made will be lost.** The CEC considers this one of its major findings in its first year, which it expects to address more fully as it continues its work.



## Navigational Tools: Research Methods and Public Engagement

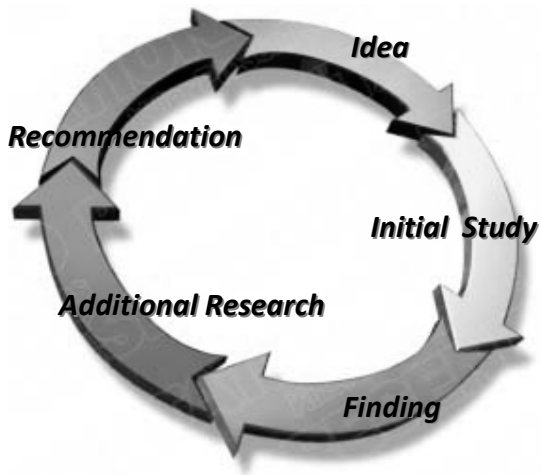
As navigators can choose from among maps, landmarks, signposts, and compasses to reach their destinations, a number of navigational tools in addition to the Six C's make up the CEC's research framework. The CEC conducts research through literature reviews, benchmarking, peer comparisons, examining best practices, and measuring local activities. It also considers anecdotal evidence from local officials, conducts surveys, and looks at budget documents. The CEC often calls upon experts to provide commentary on its work. Its diverse cadre of tools helps it fulfill its mission and philosophy by examining all sides of the issues it researches.

Any discussion of navigational tools for local efficiency begs the question of implementation. Ultimately, the CEC and its recommendations serve Sangamon County in an advisory capacity, and implementation of its recommendations is incumbent upon local officials and the citizens who elect them. The CEC therefore strives to maintain high levels of communication with the citizens of Sangamon County.

This being the case, the CEC began its work with a series of Public Input Meetings in fall and winter of 2011. At these meetings, Sangamon County residents and elected officials provided comments to the CEC as to areas where they perceived potential for efficiencies. The CEC held an additional set of three public meetings in fall 2012, reporting to the public on its progress to date and garnering additional suggestions.

The CEC also receives public input through letters and emails. Groups such as the Sangamon County Farm Bureau and the Capital Area Association of Realtors have provided suggestions in this fashion. The CEC works to reach out to the public through presentations of its work to local bodies. Civic groups such as the Rochester Lions Club have invited Commissioners to present at their regular meetings. Finally, the CEC has conducted a general input survey from business leaders in the community. As a whole, the CEC hopes to encourage additional input and engagement from the public, believing that public involvement will be particularly critical in the implementation phase of the CEC's efforts.

## The Terrain So Far: Research Areas Under CEC Review



The committees of the CEC have examined numerous research areas over the course of their first year. Some of these issues have received the Commission's support and have been finalized as recommendations. Others still require further attention as they move through the stages of the research and validation process.

With each of its research topics, the CEC engages in a cyclic process to understand the background, come to a finding that a matter is worthy of study, collect relevant information and data about the matter, draft a report addressing what was found and potential options for improvement, and then finalize a recommendation. Once a recommendation is approved, the CEC also conducts informational activities to make its reports and formal recommendations known to the involved jurisdictions and the public.

The CEC has examined a myriad of issues, including:

- **Inventorying and Sharing Road Maintenance and Other Equipment**
- **Waste Management and Hauling, Including Opportunities for Joint Recycling**
- **Building Codes and Permitting Processes**
- **Volunteer Fire Protection and Rural Emergency Response**
- **Prairie Capital Convention Center and Springfield Convention and Visitor's Bureau Cooperation**
- **College and University Cooperation with, and Assistance to, Local Governments**
- **Consolidation of Garages and Parts Inventories**
- **Pooled Government Employee Health Insurance**
- **Regional Joint Purchasing Opportunities**
- **Energy Efficiency Opportunities**
- **Automation of Public Safety Reporting**
- **Public Education Transportation**
- **Various aspects of Police Protection**
- **Publications and Other State Mandates**



Many of these areas are still under review. While not all of these topics will result in formal CEC recommendations, the CEC reviews all public suggestions and citizen input as part of the research process outlined in its philosophy on recommendations.

It is also important to note that while its work has primarily focused on areas where improvements are possible, this does not mean that actions have not already been taken by local governments in the region to improve service and reduce cost. The CEC has found that local leaders and their administrative staff are often aware of the challenges they face and have worked both independently and collectively to create additional efficiencies.

In fall of 2012, the CEC prepared and adopted a document applauding *Positive Local Efforts* in each of the six efficiency areas represented by the Six C's, discussed above. It recognized in the course of its research that many units of government in Sangamon County are already attempting to improve services and increase efficiency. By working to recognize these efforts, the CEC hopes to continuously emphasize the avenues for navigating toward better service provision. The Commission also believes that the fact that many units of local government have taken actions to improve their efficiency and effectiveness bodes well for the implementation of CEC recommendations.

## Mapping Our Destination: Formal Recommendations to Date

In addition to the seven general research reports described above, the CEC has issued four formal recommendations at the time of this report. These reports, along with steps toward their implementation that are already underway, include:

**Leaders' Peer Networks-** In the first of its formal recommendation documents, the CEC recommended that formal, regular meetings of local leaders in like positions should be established, as a venue for cooperative actions. The CEC found it intuitive that these groups should meet to share ideas, best practices, and advice. However, few groups of local leaders meet regularly or consistently with this purpose.

In response to the CEC's recommendation, some local leaders have re-established networks, such as the Sangamon County Township Officials Association. The CEC also brought regional mayors and village presidents together twice in the last year, and is in the process of assisting them with developing by-laws and a formal structure for their network. The CEC believes that these groups' efforts may lay the groundwork for cooperation and better government in the region.

**General Assistance Administration-** The CEC recommended that Township Supervisors examine existing cooperation opportunities similar to the Capital/Chatham Township intergovernmental agreement, and consider alternatives to the current structure for general assistance (GA) administration. The CEC acknowledged statutory limitations related to general assistance provision, and suggested a future legislative review of general assistance. Although townships' GA programs vary immensely throughout Sangamon County, the CEC's recommendation has fostered increased attention to these programs.

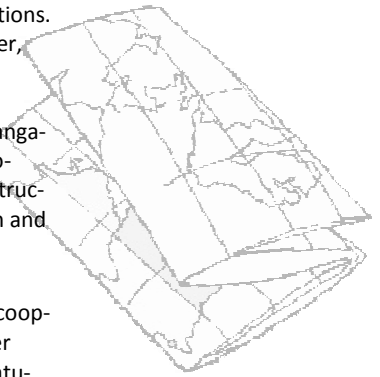
Some townships are already responding to this recommendation. For example, Clear Lake Township is now considering an intergovernmental agreement with Capital Township modeled after the one discussed. Others, such as Williams Township, have considered the model but found that it may not be cost effective for their local conditions.

**Electric Aggregation-** The CEC recommended that Sangamon County and municipalities not served by electric coops or municipally-owned electric utilities pursue energy cost savings through electric aggregation. Electric aggregation allows units of local government to negotiate lower electric supply rates on behalf of citizens. The CEC further recommended in this document that local governments work together to create their aggregations, so that administrative burdens on individual jurisdictions would be minimized.

As a result of this recommendation, eligible residents in 15 municipalities and unincorporated Sangamon County had opportunity to vote in the November 2012 election on a referendum related to electric aggregation. The referendum passed in each of the 15 municipalities. The CEC has since assisted these communities in the process of starting a group aggregation effort, including bringing community leaders together, helping them understand the required steps in the aggregation process, and helping them engage the services of an expert consultant for the electric supply bidding process.

**Township Property Tax Collection-** The CEC recommended that townships turn responsibilities for collection over to the Sangamon County Treasurer's/Capital Township Collector's office via intergovernmental agreement and vacate the position of Township Tax Collector in other townships. Upon reviewing the property tax collection process, the CEC noted that the system appeared to be redundant, with the County Treasurer collecting all second installments and the vast majority of first installments in spite of the existence of collectors in all townships. The CEC also noted that the Treasurer's office's processing cost per bill to collect first installments was generally much lower than that of townships collecting fewer payments. The CEC encouraged townships to reduce or eliminate funding for the Collectors' positions by the November deadline for setting salaries, in order to generate cost reductions by discouraging the filling of these offices. Townships can also undergo a referendum process to eliminate the office of collector, should they so choose.

The CEC has received feedback that some townships intend to undergo the process of vacating their collector's position. Although it remains uncertain how many townships will vacate the position, the Cooper Township collector, for instance, asked the CEC for guidance and assistance in implementing the recommendation to eliminate the position.



## Themes Along the Way: Challenges to Continuous Improvement

Collectively, the research that has been completed in the areas described above has contributed to the CEC's understanding of some major themes that cut across all of its work. If the CEC is orienteering the efficiency and effectiveness of local governments in the County from a starting point to an end destination, then these themes are the sign posts that the CEC has encountered time and time again along the way.

The first theme, which represents an opportunity for continuous improvement, is that many local governments are already taking positive steps to be efficient. As mentioned previously, specific examples are noted in the CEC's *Positive Local Efforts* report. As the CEC continues to discover that local governments are making efforts in this direction, it hopes to recognize them in future reports.

Even though positive actions are being taken, the public is often unaware of them or believes that they are insufficient. As a result, the Commission believed early in its work that individuals, groups, and associations would step forward with their own ideas as to how efficiency and effectiveness could be improved. The CEC has found this to be the case far more infrequently than it had anticipated, even though numerous opportunities to give suggestions and comments have been provided. This is a barrier not only to the CEC in collecting the public's thoughts, but will ultimately become a barrier to continuous improvement. If the public does not recognize positive efforts or is cynical toward the efforts being undertaken, its support for new ways of doing business will be lost, and implementation will falter.

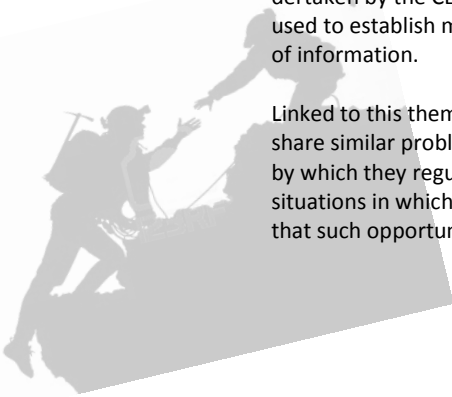
The CEC has found over the past twelve months that the job of improving local government efficiency and effectiveness is more complicated than Commissioners initially thought. Steps toward efficiency that are legally, administratively, and politically easy—what one might consider the “low-hanging fruit”—are likely already being taken. Local government employees often work well within the institutional or process constraints provided to them, such as state statutory limitations. The Commission has found that many of the actions that can and should be taken to improve local efficiency are stymied by state laws and mandates. Again and again, local administrators have pointed to this problem, and the CEC will need to give additional attention as to how this barrier might be addressed.

Next, the CEC encountered evidence again-and-again that more and better information would facilitate local efficiency and improve management practice, but that there is a gap between data and practice. The time spent determining control points could be better spent navigating toward more efficient processes if performance data was available and usefully applied to program management. The CEC has found that performance data is seldom collected locally and, when it is collected, it is not in a useful form to improve administrative or program management.

The CEC believes that if local governments collected performance data and utilized it for the purpose of continuous improvement, more opportunities to increase effectiveness or efficiency would become evident. Indeed, the CEC would suggest that if this situation is not rectified, any improvements made in the short term will likely be lost over time.

In addition, the CEC has found that few jurisdictions actively manage against a plan. One of the first efforts undertaken by the CEC was to review existing plans to identify the performance or administrative objectives being used to establish metrics. However, few plans appear to be in place, and those that are seldom include this type of information.

Linked to this theme of data collection is that of information sharing. Many of the jurisdictions in the region share similar problems. Often a community faces a problem that another has solved, but there is no mechanism by which they regularly share these problems and solutions. Additionally, the CEC has identified examples of situations in which local units of government could reduce their costs through partnerships, but are unaware that such opportunities exist due to lack of communication.



As previously discussed, the CEC's very first formal action resulted from this finding: a recommendation that local leaders form peer networks. Throughout its research, it found that this type of communication was locally underutilized and undervalued. Local officials can coordinate their purchases and planning better, share their best practices, and otherwise encourage one another to function more effectively only if they are consistently communicating.

While the CEC believes that the implementation of the recommendations it has made and will make is important to improving the efficiency and effectiveness of local governments in Sangamon County, of even greater importance is the establishment of a commitment to continuous improvement. This will require on-going communication among local officials and their staff, as well as improvements in data collection, commitment to work toward measureable objectives, and planning necessary for our communities to be managed toward better results.

## Continuing Toward Our Destination: Workplan for 2013

Many challenges await the CEC in the coming year. Some of the CEC's findings will require extensive research in advance of its final report. Now that it has invested time in gathering valuable information and establishing a research process, the CEC anticipates devoting its energies to a number of larger issues. The CEC hopes to pursue issues such as emergency response, joint purchasing, police protection, and road repair in the coming year. Already committees have begun examining these research areas, and some have received the support of the full Commission for further review. Each Committee chair has taken the opportunity to describe his or her committee's workplan for the coming year below:



CEC Executive Committee (from left): Mike Murphy (Vice-Chair); Marilyn Kushak (Administrative); Karen Hasara (Chair); Jim Donelan (Public works); Cliff Erwin (Community Development); not pictured: Bob Gray (Public Safety)

### Administrative, Management & Budget Committee 2013 Outlook Commissioner Marilyn A. Kushak, Committee Chair

The CEC's Administrative, Management and Budget (AMB) Committee focuses on matters associated with how municipalities handle procurement, personnel, information technologies, and other "back office" functions they undertake. Because of this focus, during 2013 the committee will be researching a number of areas that show promise for obtaining better government service at lower cost. These include:

**Joint Purchasing/Procurement Opportunities and Education:** Local governments and special districts buy many things, from simple commodities, like paper, to capital items, like vehicles and heavy equipment. The committee anticipates that if these goods could be purchased with increased coordination, savings from bulk purchasing power could be generated. Moreover, the group anticipates that if local governments made purchases locally, they could buy at lower costs and the public dollars spent on these items would remain in the area, helping both residents and their local governments. To advance this idea, the committee is working with Leadership Springfield in helping identify potential "Buy Local" enhancements for local government entities.

**Government Health Care Cost Containment:** One of the fastest growing costs facing both business and government is the growing cost of health care. During 2013 the committee will be researching approaches to containing public employee health care costs.

**Identification of State Government Mandates and Requirements That Are Barriers to Local Government Efficiency and Effectiveness:** As the committee has gone about its work, one of the constraints it has found to reducing the cost of local government are various restrictions and mandates placed on local governments by state law. One of these mandates, for example, is the requirement that certain governmental reports and other information must be published in print rather than simply provided in some other form, such as electronically via the internet. The committee is researching the nature and scope of the impact that these mandates have on local government costs and services, and is specifically researching the printed publication mandate. It hopes to develop recommendations for improvements that would meet the need for governments to be transparent while still reducing cost.

**Business/Private Sector Input/Perspective Relative to Improved Government**

**Efficiencies:** The committee believes that much can be gained from obtaining the perspective of the business community concerning actions local governments might take to reduce cost and improve service, and will continue to obtain this input during 2013.

**Identification of Marketing and Promotional Opportunities as Efficiency Recommendations Are Un-**

**veiled to the Public:** The committee and the CEC are mindful that its work will only be useful if it is understood and implemented. The general public in particular has a role to play in both bringing the CEC's recommendations to the attention of local leaders and advocating for their implementation. For this reason the AMB committee will continue to look at ways in which the CEC's actions and activities may be marketed and promoted.

### Community Development Committee 2013 Outlook Commissioner Cliff Erwin, Committee Chair

The CEC's Community Development Committee has been tasked with addressing effectiveness and efficiency related to education, social services, economic development, and other "quality-of-life" matters addressed by local governments. During 2013 the committee will focus its efforts on the following areas:

**The Building and Permitting Process:** The committee will continue its study of the platting, permitting, building code and other development-related processes with the intent of developing recommendations to make these processes more efficient and less costly. The committee's goal is to find ways in which this can be done, increasing transparency as well as efficiency. A "one step" or "one stop" permitting process may be a potential outcome.

**A Local Government - Higher Education Partnership:** Often the problems faced by local governments require specialized expertise that is not available on the staff of many small municipalities and special districts. It may, however, exist at the various colleges and universities in the area. The committee is researching ways in which linkages and partnerships can be forged between local governments in the area and institutions of higher education. The committee anticipates that this will lead to recommendations for: stronger and increased opportunities for university and municipality partnerships; guidance as to how these partnerships might be developed and structured; and how both students and faculty at these institutions may become an on-going component of local government effectiveness and improved efficiency.

**Linkages Between Public Libraries and School Libraries:** Initial considerations indicate the potential for the development of cooperative and collaborative efforts between the public library system and school library systems which would improve the operations of both. This may also possibly include efforts involving other organizations, such as churches and social agencies. The committee's goal is to identify and recommend approaches that will increase library services and at the same time achieve a more efficient expenditure of resources.

**Public School District Consolidation:** During 2013 the committee will examine the possibilities for more school district consolidation in the county. The CEC may recommend that a task force be created to study these proposals.

**Other Public School Related Items:** The committee also intends to examine other education-related issues, such as the purpose and function of the Regional Board of School Trustees and the potential for more group purchasing through the Regional Office of Education.

**Networking Between and Among Special Districts:** Much promise is held for one of the recommendations of the CEC that has already been implemented: the bringing together of municipal governments in a formal and on-going way that allows them to share problems, solutions and potentially even resources. The committee is now working on approaches that would encourage other governmental units, such as water districts and library districts, to develop a networking system similar to the networks that have been established by the mayors and village presidents of Sangamon County and township officials of Sangamon County.

## Public Safety Committee 2013 Outlook

Commissioner Bob Gray, Committee Chair

The Commission's Public Safety Committee has been tasked with considering matters related to police, fire, emergency services, and other law enforcement and public protection functions. To advance its work, the committee has visited with a number of people in leadership positions, reviewed significant media and other reports, and engaged in ongoing conversation of committee members' personal experiences, all focusing on law enforcement, fire protection, emergency response and the combined city/county E911 system.

During 2013 the committee is focusing its efforts on several areas:

**Addressing Police Protection in the Region:** In addition to the County Sheriff, and with only a few exceptions, the many municipalities in the County each have local police departments. This means that county-wide there is one police department for every 6,600 residents. In at least one case, two communities have a joint department, and in another case the community has eliminated the department and contracts with Sheriff's deputies. There is an indication that more of the smaller communities will be unable to afford much of a police presence in the near future. This has the potential for affecting the Sheriff's role at a time when cutbacks have already affected the Sheriff's ability to provide much coverage in the County outside the urban Springfield area. In addition, in the immediate Springfield area, a different set of circumstances is in play as significant unincorporated areas exist totally surrounded by the City of Springfield and must be patrolled. All-in-all, the committee has found that while the region does have a law enforcement system, it may not be an efficient one. As this trend is not encouraging, during 2013 the committee will be looking at approaches to address these and other related problems. A single county-wide law enforcement agency might have merit.

**Consolidation of Fire Districts:** Along with the City of Springfield's fire department, 29 local fire protection districts serve within Sangamon County. Each of these districts outside of the City of Springfield has its own taxing authority. Nine of the fire districts surrounding Springfield contract with the SFD for total fire services. The 20 fire districts covering the balance of the County are served by volunteers, or in a couple of cases paid staff and volunteers. The dependence on volunteers is problematic, with current volunteers aging and districts experiencing difficulty in recruiting new ones. The committee is reviewing the feasibility of consolidating fire districts, and the option of a single fire district for Sangamon County.

**Emergency Response:** Emergency response has primarily become a responsibility of the fire departments and districts. In the area covered by the Springfield Fire Department, the committee is reviewing the costs of non-fire emergency calls and possible alternatives for handling these calls. In the rest of the County, and with some exception, the volunteer nature of the fire districts appears to have led to response times that are problematic. During the coming months the committee anticipates conducting a more detailed assessment of response time to identify the scope of any problem.

**Improvement in E911 System:** The combined city/county E911 system has serviced the County adequately since its creation, but time and technology suggests an overall review is probably in order. Over the next several months the committee will address this matter to determine if opportunities for improved effectiveness and efficiency exist.

**Establishment of "Service Areas":** The committee has taken a preliminary look at a "regional service area" concept as a means of improving government efficiency and effectiveness for the citizens of Sangamon County. The committee is studying an approach that could be built around the establishment of eight "service areas", created through the unification of townships, plus the City of Springfield. The county, townships and municipalities would then pool resources to provide a variety of services in each region, including most public safety and public works services.

## Public Works Committee 2013 Outlook Commissioner Jim Donelan, Committee Chair

The Public Works Committee is addressing matters associated with roads, fleets, waste management, energy use, and other infrastructure-related services provided by local governments. It is presently working towards recommendations in three areas, each of which has been identified as a promising area for efficiency and effectiveness improvement by the full CEC in the form of "Findings":

**Infrastructure Equipment Sharing:** The committee has found that one area that shows promise for municipal cost savings is the sharing of the equipment necessary for the maintenance or construction of public infrastructure, such as roads, sewer and water. The committee anticipates making recommendations in this area that may include the expansion of an existing infrastructure equipment inventory for Sangamon County Townships to all pertinent Sangamon County jurisdictions. The goal of equipment sharing is to encourage costs saving and better coordination of infrastructure/capital planning, as well as other advantages.

**Solid Waste & Recycling Personnel & Programs:** Actions to reduce solid waste through recycling show promise as a means to reduce costs, both by reducing the waste stream and by better coordination of public resources committed to this task. It is anticipated that a forthcoming recommendation in this area may include improving the communications between the City of Springfield and Sangamon County related to recycling and solid waste management, the reestablishment of the recycling advisory committee, an updating of the Sangamon County Solid Waste Management Plan, and better coordination of personnel.

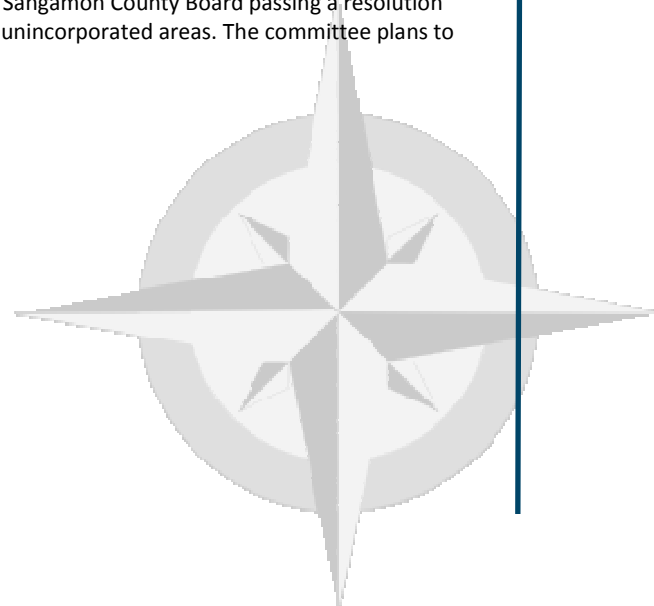
**Energy Efficiency:** One of the on-going costs to local governments is the cost of energy. Efforts already underway in several communities to reduce the use of electricity show that noticeable cost savings can be obtained. The committee anticipates a recommendation in this area that may include the sharing of information relating to public-private partnerships and the availability of grant programs specifically designed to help with the purchase of smart, energy-efficient equipment. This information may be used to upgrade government facilities to save money by reducing municipal energy costs.

The Public Works Committee is also presently researching or addressing:

**Garage Consolidation:** This is multi-jurisdictional review of existing public works facilities exploring partnership opportunities (private-public or public-public) intended to reduce costs.

**Infrastructure Funding:** This involves a review of infrastructure funding, both existing and potential.

**Electrical Aggregation:** The committee and CEC's recommendation in support of electrical aggregation has already been adopted by many municipalities in the County as part of referenda placed on the ballot this past November. This was followed by the Sangamon County Board passing a resolution supporting an "opt-in" aggregation program for the unincorporated areas. The committee plans to continue to follow-up on these promising efforts.



## Refining the Destination: Where are we going?

These workplans will undoubtedly evolve as the CEC's research unfolds. The potential research described above will be supplemented by efforts to seek out efficiency opportunities that as yet remain undiscovered and to generate additional public input.

More important to the CEC, however, is the ultimate goal or destination that the CEC now prioritizes. In the past year, the CEC has found that its work should not focus on only a limited series of process improvements, governmental consolidations, or conservation efforts. Instead, as the final destination for its two-year term, the CEC hopes to cultivate a culture that prioritizes continuous improvement for Sangamon County.

Rather than embrace the status quo and work in silos, local governments have the responsibility to coordinate and cooperate with improved effectiveness as an on-going goal. The CEC feels that this is the mandate citizens verbalized when they approved its establishing referendum. Some local governments are certainly doing admirable work to improve the current situation of their effectiveness and efficiency, but it seems to occur only on a happenstance basis, when fiscal or legal pressures necessitate a reevaluation of performance.

For the next year of its work, the CEC will utilize this conceptual framework to examine a new set of findings and recommendations, to generate additional public insight and involvement, and to culminate its work with a meaningful final report. A year from its outset, the CEC has made major strides. It has identified starting points for itself and many of Sangamon County's local governments. It has begun to understand and leverage its tools through a strong research philosophy and process. More importantly, however, it has developed a better understanding of its desired destination. The CEC will partner with local governments of Sangamon County to navigate toward a culture of continuous improvement, in and beyond the coming year.

## Recognition of Assistance to the Commission

Throughout its first year, the CEC has received support from SSCRPC staff and a number of volunteers and interns:

### **Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission**

Norm Sims, SSCRPC Executive Director

Jeff Fulgenzi, SSCRPC Senior Planner— Strategic and Comprehensive Planning

Amy Uden, SSCRPC—Graduate Public Service Intern

Jane Lewis, SSCRPC—Clerk/Typist

### **Interns**

Margaret Long and Lyndee Rodamaker— Benedictine University

### **Community Volunteers & Contractual Researchers**

Richard Bennett

Marilyn Cagnoni

Martin Colloton

Kiran Desai

Jake Ferguson

Neil Flynn

Carol Kulek

Stephen Schnorf

## CEC Work Products to Date:

### Reports:

- o General Local Government Functions*
- o A Comparison of Special Districts*
- o Cost of Local Government Comparison*
- o History and Nature of Joint Services in Sangamon County*
- o Positive Local Efforts*
- o Preliminary Report: Sangamon County Municipal Leader Interviews*
- o Philosophy on Recommendations*

### Recommendations:

- o Leaders' Peer Networks*
- o Township General Assistance Administration*
- o Electric Aggregation*
- o Township Property Tax Collection*

These CEC reports and recommendations are available via [www.sscrpc.com](http://www.sscrpc.com).

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